

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9508
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
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AMEMBASSY NASSAU
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 KINGSTON 0706

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JM
SUBJECT: SHEARER TOPS POPULARITY POLL; MANLEY FALLS BEHIND PATTERSON

1. SUMMARY: BETWEEN JANUARY 5-23, THE TABLOID "STAR" CARRIED A SERIES OF ARTICLES REPORTING THE RESULTS OF A POLL OF (A) THE URBAN MIDDLE CLASS, (B) THE URBAN WORKING CLASS AND (C) SMALL FARMERS. THE POLL SOUGHT THEIR VIEWS ON THE CAUSES OF JAMAICA'S PROBLEMS AND THE POLICIES OF THE GOVERNMENT. IT ALSO TESTED THE RELATIVE POPULARITY OF SEVEN PUBLIC FIGURES. IN RANK ORDER THEY WERE: FORMER PRIME MINISTER HUGH SHEARER, GOVERNOR GENERAL FLORIZEL GLASSPOLE, FOREIGN MINISTER P.J. PATTERSON, PRIME MINISTER MICHAEL MANLEY, OPPOSITION LEADER EDWARD SEAGA, DR. D.K. DUNCAN AND MARXIST TREVOR MUNROE. THE RESULTS OF THE OVERALL POLL APPEAR TO REVEAL A JAMAICAN POPULACE WHOSE BASIC CONSERVATISM IS FREQUENTLY OVERLOOKED. FOR EXAMPLE, WHILE ALMOST ONE-HALF OF THE WORKERS WOULD ACCEPT GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP OF INDUSTRY AND OTHER PRIVATE SECTOR ENTERPRISES, ROUGHLY 75 PERCENT OF MIDDLE CLASS AND FARMING RESPONDENTS OPPOSE SUCH ACTION, A SET OF
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RESULTS WHICH CORRELATES CLOSELY WITH THEIR VIEW OF THE DEGREE OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY DISPLAYED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR. THERE IS SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT AMONG ALL GROUPS THAT GOVERNMENT'S MISMANAGEMENT AND ITS RELIANCE ON RADICAL RHETORIC ARE IMPORTANT CAUSES OF JAMAICA'S PRESENT PROBLEMS, BUT THE FARMERS AND WORKERS DIFFER SHARPLY WITH THE MIDDLE CLASS BY CON-

CLUDING THAT UNEMPLOYMENT IS THE COUNTRY'S MOST PRES-
SING PROBLEM -- THE MIDDLE CLASS WOULD TACKLE MIS-
MANAGEMENT FIRST. IT IS INTERESTING, HOWEVER, THAT
WHILE MODERATE ATTITUDES PREVAIL, ON AN IMPORTANT --
AND EMOTIVE -- ISSUE LIKE REDISTRIBUTION OF LAND, THE
RESPONDENTS WERE DISTINCTLY EGALITARIAN. SINCE THE
REPORTS ARE LENGTHY AND DETAILED, THEY ARE BEING FOR-
WARDED BY AIRGRAM -- EXCEPT FOR THOSE ON THE POPU-
LARITY OF JAMAICA'S POLITICAL LEADERS WHICH ARE
REPORTED BELOW. END SUMMARY.

2. BETWEEN JANUARY 5-23, THE DAILY "STAR" (THE RACY
SISTER PAPER OF "THE GLEANER") CARRIED TEN ARTICLES
BASED ON POLLS CONDUCTED TWO MONTHS EARLIER UNDER THE
DIRECTION OF DR. CARL STONE, POLITICAL SCIENTIST AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES AND JAMAICA'S MOST
PROMINENT PSEPHOLOGIST. WHILE THE POLLS SOUGHT TO
SURVEY OPINION ON SUCH ISSUES AS (A) GOVERNMENT
OWNERSHIP OF INDUSTRY, (B) ACQUISITION OF LAND, (C)
UNDERSTANDING OF IDEOLOGY AND (D) THE CAUSES OF
JAMAICA'S PROBLEMS, THE MOST EAGERLY AWAITED POLLS
DEALT WITH THE RELATIVE POPULARITY OF SEVEN POLITI-
CAL FIGURES: (A) PRIME MINISTER MICHAEL MANLEY, (B)
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION EDWARD SEAGA, (C) FORMER
PRIME MINISTER HUGH SHEARER, (D) GOVERNOR GENERAL
FLORIZEL GLASSPOLE, (E) FOREIGN MINISTER P.J.
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PATTERSON, (F) FORMER MOBILIZATION MINISTER D.K.
DUNCAN, AND (G) LEADER OF THE WORKERS LIBERATION
LEAGUE TREVOR MUNROE.

3. STONE POLLED THREE DISTINCT GROUPS: (A) URBAN
MIDDLE CLASS, (B) SMALL FARMERS, AND (C) URBAN
WORKING CLASS. IN THE CASE OF THE POPULARITY POLL,
THE FINDINGS FROM EACH OF THE THREE GROUPS WERE
REPORTED SEPARATELY; I.E., THERE WAS NO PUBLISHED
"ALL-JAMAICA" RESULT. TO MAKE THE RESULTS MORE
USEFUL FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, WE MADE AN ARBITRARY
RE-CALCULATION TO CREATE AN OVERALL POINT SCORE
(OUR ROUGH AND READY METHOD IS SPELLED OUT IN THE
AIRGRAM) AND HAVE COME UP WITH THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS:

-- FORMER PRIME MINISTER SHEARER, WITH AN EMBASSY "SCORE" OF
164.66, ENJOYS THE GREATEST POPULARITY OF THE SEVEN PERSONS
COVERED. THE RANK ORDER AFTER SHEARER IS:

GLASSPOLE	156.66
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PATTERSON	91.33
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MANLEY	83.33
SEAGA	73.33
DUNCAN	20.66
MUNROE	24.00

-- PATTERSON'S NARROW MARGIN OVER MANLEY DERIVES WHOLLY -- BUT
SIGNIFICANTLY -- FROM MIDDLE CLASS BACKING. HOWEVER,

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 KINGSTON 0706

MANLEY EDGED PATTERSON WITH FARMERS AND WORKERS.

-- NOT ONLY IS THE MARGIN BETWEEN SHEARER
AND SEAGA SUBSTANTIAL, BUT THE JAMAICA
LABOUR PARTY (JLP) LEADER FELL BEHIND
THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER IN THE EYES
OF ALL THREE GROUPS POLLED.

-- THE PRIME MINISTER FARED SIGNIFICANTLY
BETTER IN THE EYES OF THE URBAN WORKERS
AND SMALL FARMERS THAN IN THOSE OF THE
MIDDLE CLASS. HOWEVER, HE DID LESS WELL
WITH THE URBAN WORKERS THAN DID SHEARER
OR GLASSPOLE.

-- THE OPINION REGARDING SEAGA WAS RELATIVELY

UNIFORM. HE FARED BETTER WITH THE MIDDLE CLASS, BUT EVEN THERE WAS SURPASSED BY SHEARER, GLASSPOLE, AND PATTERSON.

-- THE POOR PERFORMANCE OF THE TWO LEFT-
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ISTS INCLUDED IN THE POLL HAS ATTRACTED MUCH ATTENTION. ODDLY ENOUGH, SMALL FARMERS TREATED BOTH DUNCAN AND MUNROE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE TENDERLY THAN DID THE WORKERS. THE MIDDLE CLASS, UNSUR-
SPRISINGLY, LIKED NEITHER.

-- THE EXTENT OF THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S POPU-
LARITY WAS SURPRISING. MOREOVER, ALTHOUGH HE CAME AFTER SHEARER, HE NEVERTHELESS WAS MORE POPULAR WITH THE URBAN WORKING CLASS THAN WAS THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER, WHO PRESENTLY HEADS ONE OF JAMAICA'S TWO CHIEF LABOR UNIONS.

-- IF SHEARER AND SEAGA CAN BE CONSIDERED TO REPRESENT THE JLP AND MANLEY PLUS PATTER-
SON TO EXEMPLIFY THE PNP, THE OPPOSITION PARTY APPEARS TO ENJOY FAR GREATER POPULAR-
ITY THAN THE RULING PNP. AND IF DUNCAN IS FACTORED IN ON THE PNP SIDE, THE GAP IS EVEN GREATER. (THIS KIND OF RESULT LED STONE TO WRITE IN "THE GLEANER" OF JANUARY 30 THAT SUCH CONCLUSIONS ARE ERRONEOUS. HE SAYS THAT HIS POLL SHOWS THAT WHILE THE PNP HAS SLUMPED FROM THE 57 PERCENT OF POPULAR SUPPORT IT ENJOYED IN 1976, NEVER-
THELESS IT STILL COMMANDS THE BACKING OF 52 PERCENT OF JAMAICANS. THIS RESULT HAS BEEN PUBLISHED NOWHERE ELSE.)

4. THE POLL APPEARS TO TELL US SEVERAL THINGS:

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-- THOSE IDENTIFIED WITH MODERATE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC POSITIONS ARE APPARENTLY FAR MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN ARE PROPONENTS OF RADICAL PRECRIPTIONS. THIS CONCLUSION

IS BUTTRESSED BY THE EXTREMELY POOR
SHOWING OF DUNCAN AND MUNROE, AND MAY HAVE
CONTRIBUTED IN PART TO PRIME MINISTER
MANLEY'S LACKLUSTRE PERFORMANCE. (HOWEVER,
AS THE POLL REGARDING THE CAUSE OF JAMAICA'S
PROBLEMS SUGGESTS, MANLEY'S POPULARITY
WITHOUT DOUBT IS ALSO AFFECTED BY A
WIDE-SPREAD BELIEF THAT GOVERNMENT MIS-
MANAGEMENT UNDERLIES A LARGE PROPORTION OF
JAMAICA'S PROBLEMS.)

-- THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S POPULARITY SUG-
GESTS THE ACTIVE APPEAL OF THIS SYMBOL
OF STABILITY AND TRADITION. GIVEN THE
CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES URGED BY THE PRIME
MINISTER'S PEOPLE'S NATIONAL PARTY (PNP),
THE SUBSTANTIAL BACKING GIVEN GLASSPOLE
MAY REFLECT A DESIRE ON THE PART OF
JAMAICANS FOR A DEGREE OF CONTINUITY
AND PREDICTABILITY -- A DESIRE THE GOVERN-
MENT HAS OVERLOOKED.

-- THE GAP WHICH APPEARS TO SEPARATE SHEARER
AND SEAGA CAN ONLY INTENSIFY THE INTRA-
PARTY DIVISIONS WHICH HAVE BEGUN TO
EMERGE WITHIN THE OPPOSITION JAMAICA
LABOR PARTY (JLP). SEAGA'S AUTOCRATIC
WAYS -- AND THE PARTY'S POOR PERFORMANCE
IN THE 1976 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS --
HAVE SPARKED NEW MUTTERINGS AGAINST
HIS LEADERSHIP. THE INDOLENT SHEARER
DOES NOT PRESENTLY APPEAR PREPARED TO
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EXPAND THE ENERGY REQUIRED TO OUST
SEAGA BUT THE EVIDENCE OF HIS POPULARITY COULD
INSPIRE HIM TO GREATER ACTIVITY. IT MAY WELL BRING TO
HIS SIDE PRESENT FOLLOWERS OF SEAGA WHO SEE A

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BRIGHTER FUTURE IN SUPPORTING SHEARER.
THIS POSSIBILITY IS ENHANCED BY THE FACT
THAT SEAGA FALLS BEHIND NOT ONLY SHEARER,
BUT ALSO GLASSPOLE, PATTERSON AND MANLEY
-- AND MANLEY ALSO FARED POORLY.

-- PATTERSON'S ABILITY TO WIN GREATER AP-
PROVAL THAN MANLEY, MARGINAL THOUGH THE
DIFFERENCE IS, MAY PROMPT THE FOREIGN
MINISTER TO RE-ASSESS HIS OWN POLITICAL
PLANS. IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT PAT-
TERSON SEES HIMSELF AS MANLEY'S SUCCESSOR
BUT HAS CONCLUDED THAT HE MUST WAIT UNTIL
THE PRIME MINISTER FALTERS BADLY AND HIS
(MANLEY'S) SHAIRMA HAS BEGUN TO WANE.
THE RESULTS OF THE POLL MAY SUGGEST TO
PATTERSON -- AND TO MANY OF THE PNP'S
MODERATES THAT THE MOMENT FOR A CHANGE
LIES NEARER THAN THEY THOUGHT.

-- THE MODERATES WILL BE EMBOLDENED BY THE
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POOR SHOWING OF DUNCAN AND MUNROE (AS
WELL AS BY THE ADVERSE POLITICAL IMPACT
OF RADICAL RHETORIC REVEALED IN THE
PORTION OF THE POLL DEALING WITH
JAMAICA'S PROBLEMS). THEY MAY ALSO SEE
IN THE SHOWING OF SHEARER AND GLASSPOLE
THAT THERE IS A CONTINUING DESIRE FOR A
MORE MODERATE APPROACH TO THE COUNTRY'S
ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL NEEDS. WHILE
THEY WILL VIEW THE SHOWING OF SHEARER WITH
CONCERN, IT MAY ALSO CONVINCE THEM THAT

THE PNP HAS SUFFERED AS A RESULT OF ITS RELIANCE ON RADICAL RHETORIC AND CAN BEST RECAPTURE POPULAR SUPPORT BY MORE MODERATE AND PRAGMATIC POLICIES. THIS WILL, OF COURSE, WEAKEN MANLEY IN THE PNP.

5. THE RESULTS OF STONE'S POLL ARE DRAMATIC -- IF THEY ARE ACCURATE. A FRIEND OF STONE SAYS THAT THE POLLSTER IS WELL-SATISFIED WITH HIS POLLING TECHNIQUE, AND BELIEVES THAT IT PROVIDES A PROPERLY REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLING OF THE THREE GROUPS. WHILE WE HAVE NO FACTUAL BASIS ON WHICH TO QUESTION THAT ASSERTION, THE RESULTS OF THE POLL ARE CONVENIENT FOR (A) ENEMIES OF THE LEFT, (B) CRITICS OF MICHAEL MANLEY AND HIS BRAND OF "DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM", (C) THOSE WHO WISH TO VITALIZE THE PNP "MODERATES", (D) JLP OPPONENTS OF EDDIE SEAGA, (E) THE MANY JAMAICANS WHO FEAR THE DIRECTION IN WHICH THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN GOING, AND (F) A BODY OF THOUGHT WHICH ARGUES THAT JAMAICA WILL CONTINUE TO BE ILL-SERVED AS LONG AS BOTH MANLEY AND SEAGA RETAIN LEADERSHIP OF THEIR PARTIES. AS WAS INEVITABLE, PARTI-

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CULARLY GIVEN THE RESULTS OF THE POLLS, THERE ARE RUMORS THAT THE FINDINGS WERE SOMEWHAT COOKED. WE CANNOT ENTIRELY DISMISS THESE RUMORS SINCE THEY COME ON OCCASION FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS AND HAVE NO DESIRE TO SEE THEM DISCREDITED -- PERHAPS THEY FEAR THEY ARE TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE. NONTHELESS, STONE IS HIS "OWN MAN", ALTHOUGH IT IS POSSIBLE HE MAY HAVE UNCONSCIOUSLY STRUCTURED HIS QUESTIONS IN A MANNER WHICH SKEWED THE RESULTS TO SUPPORT HIS OFT-EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE MANLEY GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE AND OVER-RELIANCE ON RHETORIC -- BUT THE RESULTS ARE ALSO AT VARIANCE WITH HIS PERSONAL LEFTIST INCLINATIONS.

6. TO CONCLUDE, THE PRECISE RESULTS OF THE POLL MAY BE SUBJECT TO SOME MEASURE OF SKEPTICISM, BUT THE OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE REMAINS THAT THE POPULARITY OF PM MANLEY HAS WANED, AND THAT MOST JAMAICANS APPEAR TO FAVOR MODERATION IN THEIR POLITICAL LEADERS AND IN THE POLICIES OF THEIR GOVERNMENT. PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT RESULT OF THE POLL WILL BE THE MANNER IN WHICH JAMAICA'S POLITICIANS -- LEFT, RIGHT, AND CENTER -- ACT UPON ITS FINDINGS.

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